

March 5, 2013

Good afternoon Senator Slossberg, Representative Abercrombie and members of the Human Resources Committee. My name is Joanne Gorenstein, and I'm the Administrator of Cheshire House, a 75-bed skilled nursing facility, and the only five-star facility in Waterbury, CT.

In all the years I've been in this business, I've never seen it so close to reaching a crisis like it is today. There is now way Providers can continue to give the care and services that the State and Federal Government require when they survey our building each year, there is a zero-tolerance mandate yet we are underfunded each and every day for every Medicaid recipient. The few private payers and Medicare rehabilitation patients don't begin to make up for the shortfall in Medicaid payments and non-payment for the many that are pending for months on end.

The people we are for are older and sicker and so are their responsible parties. Getting residents out of nursing homes with 24-hour care 7 days a week is most of the time not feasible. There is no place for them to go as you can't force an elderly spouse, child or sibling to take a resident home. And, one 24-hour-a-day aide may be unsafe and insufficient to meet the patient's needs.

The Bills before you may not hold all the answers, but it's a step in the right direction and may relieve some of the pressure we're experiencing. As we speak, many providers are either in the midst of bankruptcy proceedings or on the verge of entering. The remaining providers need to be given some relief and increase in the Medicaid rate and timely payments of the State's obligations.

Thank you very much.